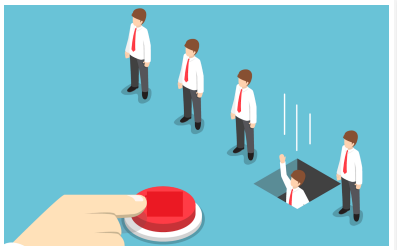
UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

Wednesday, August 13, 2025

Lawrence Berkeley Layoffs



From the Daily Cal: *...In a video sent internally to Berkeley Lab staff July 10, Lab Director Michael Witherell addressed the impacts of the fiscal year 2026 budget on lab employment, informing staff that there would be layoffs in both research and operations. The lab has approximately 3,800 full-time employees... This follows President Donald Trump's budget request for fiscal year 2026, which reduced the Department of Energy budget by $3.5 billion, with a 74% reduction in energy efficiency and renewable energy. Trump's proposed budget called several cut DOE programs part of a "Green New Scam."*

The lab's six research areas and seven operations divisions will proceed with layoffs on "two separate timelines," Witherell said in the internal video. He expressed that the layoff process would begin immediately in operations and lab directorate teams, leading to staffing reductions by Oct. 1... On the lab's research side, projects are supported by "direct funding," Witherell said in the video. Layoffs will be determined depending on which projects receive renewed funding in the fiscal year 2026 budget...

One operations staff member said that a two-week period was given to operation divisions' employees to voluntarily resign, with no additional incentives and the standard severance package. The source requested anonymity for fear of retaliation. The research division also may experience clawbacks in funds, a retraction of funds that have already been distributed, according to several internal lab communications...

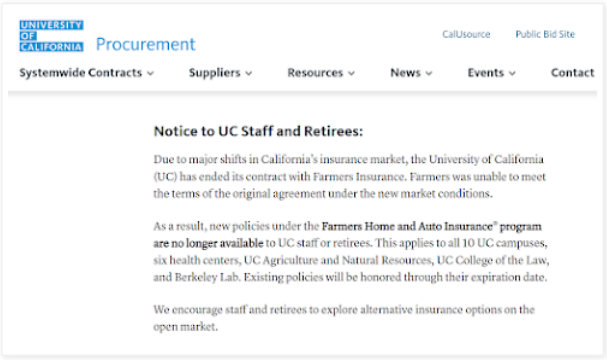
Full story at https://www.dailycal.org/news/campus/berkeley-lab-to-begin-layoffs-due-to-federal-funding-cuts/article_065538d6-ac59-44d7-b102-9982c3445382.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:05 AM No comments:

Labels: politics, UC-Berkeley

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

Discontinued


UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Procurement
CalUsource
Public Bid Site
Systemwide Contracts
Suppliers
Resources
News
Events
Contact
Notice to UC Staff and Retirees:
Due to major shifts in California's insurance market, the University of California (UC) has ended its contract with Farmers Insurance. Farmers was unable to meet the terms of the original agreement under the new market conditions.
As a result, new policies under the Farmers Home and Auto Insurance" program are no longer available to UC staff or retirees. This applies to all 10 UC campuses, six health centers, UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, UC College of the Law, and Berkeley Lab. Existing policies will be honored through their expiration date.
We encourage staff and retirees to explore alternative insurance options on the open market.

Source: https://procurement.ucop.edu/news/farmers-insurance-program-no-longer-available-uc-staff-and-retirees.

Note that existing insurance policies under this program will continue until their expiration dates. UC is apparently offering no alternatives thereafter.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 10:50 AM No comments:

Labels: UC

Missing

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

- Coalition of UC unions condemns Trump's attacks on the UC and the California economy
- Stand up for values in the face of Trump's $300 million cut to UCLA scholars
- Faculty leaders comment on UCB Chancellor Lyon's appearance before House Committee on Education and the Workforce
- CUCFA Opposes AB 715
- Pause Trellix and Form a Working Group to Explore Cybersecurity Solutions

Remaking the University

- The coalition of UC unions condemns Trump's attacks on the University of California and the Californian economy - 8/26/2025
- Liner Note 37. Chicago's Gift to Trump - 8/24/2025
- Liner Note 36. UCLA in the Extortion Machine - 8/10/2025

Higher Ed. News & Commentary

- Chronicle of Higher Education
- Inside Higher Education
- Remaking the University
- Changing Universities
- California Professor

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- UCSB Faculty Association
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- UCB Faculty Association
- Council of UC Faculty Associations

Other Faculty Organizations

- American Association of University Professors
- California Faculty Association (NEA)
- UC-AFT

Topics

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Source: https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/assembly/past-minutes.html.

The record of last academic year's Academic Senate Assembly meetings seems to have archived without minutes for the final meeting. That meeting included an action item placed on the agenda by petition - something that happens when the Senate officials don't want to discuss a topic. In this case, it involved the Trellix cybersecurity system.* Funny that no record of the meeting's outcome has not been archived. It's almost as if someone doesn't want to acknowledge the issue or outcome.

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*https://uclafacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2025/07/uc-endpoint-detection-and-response-edr.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: UC

Straws in the Wind - Part 68

From the Columbia Daily Spectator: *Barnard laid off 77 full-time staff members as part of a one-time, collegewide "restructuring," Barnard President Laura Rosenbury announced in a... community update. Faculty were not impacted by the layoffs, according to Rosenbury. The college notified staff members that they were being laid off..., Rosenbury wrote. Barnard announced the layoffs amid a debt crisis that climbed to a projected $252 million as of fiscal year 2025 against a $503 million endowment as of fiscal year 2024. Barnard's deficit hit $26.1 million in 2024.*

"This is a painful moment, as many of those leaving have helped shape the Barnard we know today," Rosenbury wrote. "We are deeply grateful to all of our colleagues for their contributions to our community." She emphasized that the college is not reducing "instructional services."

Union employees who were laid off will receive the benefits outlined in their collective bargaining agreements, while nonunion employees will receive severance, two months of health insurance, and job search assistance, according to Rosenbury. She added that laid off employees will retain access to the employee assistance program, which provides short-term counseling to employees...

Full story at https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2025/07/31/barnard-lays-off-77-full-time-staff-members-in-collegewide-restructuring/.

From WKRN: *Vanderbilt University and the University of Tennessee Knoxville have hired outside firms to investigate the status of their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs following leaked videos that reportedly show university staff admitting the programs haven't changed despite state and federal law banning the practice. Vanderbilt University announced it had hired the firm Baker Donelson to conduct an independent investigation. The University released the following statement:*

> *"Vanderbilt has hired the firm Baker Donelson to conduct an independent review of recent incidents involving covert recordings of university employees. Baker Donelson will be tasked with reviewing the specific circumstances related to the recordings and identifying steps the university can take to ensure all employees fully understand the university's policies and consistently act in accordance. The university will review the findings and recommendations of the report and take any appropriate follow-up actions. As part of our protocol, staff involved will step back from regular responsibilities to allow the review to unfold. Vanderbilt is committed to being a destination for the most promising individuals from a broad range of perspectives and creating an environment where they can realize their full potential."*

It comes after the conservative website, Townhall, obtained secret recordings of what some Republican lawmakers say are university staff at Belmont, Vanderbilt, and UT Knoxville saying the schools have not stopped their DEI programs...

Full story at https://www.wkrn.com/news/tennessee-politics/vanderbilt-ut-launch-investigations-into-dei-program-status/.

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Contributors

- California Policy Issues
- Toby Higbie
- UCLA Faculty Association

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: Barnard, collective bargaining, diversity, politics, U of Tennessee, Vanderbilt U

Indirect

UCLA is having special problems with the feds. But all research universities in the US are having to deal with the issue of capped **indirect costs** on grants. An article in Politico says that despite demands by some to resist all demands, there are talks between higher ed lobbying groups and the feds:

First Columbia, Brown and UPenn folded. Harvard is reportedly looking for a way out after President Donald Trump cut its health and science research funding by billions. Now academia writ large is trying to persuade him to back off his plan to slash universities' budgets. At Trump's urging, the National Institutes of Health in February said it was cutting by more than $4 billion the amount it pays to universities to help them cover administrative and facilities costs tied to research grants. The overture from university lobbyists comes even as the universities have succeeded in blocking Trump's plan in court — and have won the backing of key Republican lawmakers. The universities' eagerness to cut a deal shows that they don't think they can hold off Trump indefinitely. A cut of the magnitude the NIH sought would put a major dent in their budgets...

"It's been made extremely clear to us from day one by members of Congress that if we don't do something, somebody else will," Kelvin Droegemeier, a professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign who's spearheading the effort on behalf of a coalition of universities and research institutes, told POLITICO. "They said continuing forward with the current model is not in the cards. We took it to mean we could help be a part of that change or wait for it to happen."

...Even as schools were seeking relief in court and in Congress, a cadre of groups that lobby for them, including the ***Association of American Universities, the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Association of Independent Research Institutes and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities****, was working out a compromise plan to offer Trump. Others in the crosshairs of Trump's bid to cut costs, such as hospitals and research institutes, are working with them... [Last] week, Trump tried a new tactic to wrest indirect funding from top-tier universities by issuing an executive order calling for agencies to give preference to universities with lower indirect costs when issuing awards.*

The university-led group announced this spring that it was working on a new model, one that was "simple and easily explained," and in a nod to the administration's priorities: "efficient and transparent." The Financial Accountability in Research, or FAIR plan, would consist of two options for research organizations to recoup facilities and administrative expenses from the government. The first, a detailed accounting of indirect project costs, and the second, a shorter, simpler fixed percentage of a project's budget...

"The biggest difference is rather than having an indirect cost rate, which is negotiated across the entire university, this model calls for indirect costs to be estimated for every project," Jeremy Berg, former director of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, an arm of the $48 billion grant-giving National Institutes of Health, told POLITICO... "There's been so much of a fuss made at this point," Berg said, adding, "If the universities dug in their heels and said, 'We like the old model.' That's not going to happen. Instead, there'll be some fixed cap, the way the administration proposed out of the blue." ...

Full story at https://www.politico.com/news/2025/08/09/universities-trump-science-health-funding-00500531.

At the moment, indirect costs are just one part of a larger issue for UCLA. But it seems unlikely that UCLA would opt out of a deal on indirect costs - if there is one.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:05 AM No comments:

Labels: Brown University, Columbia, politics, U of Illinois, U of Pennsylvania, UCLA

Monday, August 11, 2025

No News

If you were looking for some kind of decision being announced by the Regents after today's closed meeting, you won't find one. You will find a tweet from SVP Meredith Turner:

Earlier today, University of California President James B. Milliken and Board of Regents' Chair Janet Reilly convened an emergency meeting of UC's Board of Regents to discuss a path forward after the federal administration suspended UCLA's lifesaving research funding and demanded a devastating $1 billion settlement payment. UC's leadership spent recent days evaluating the demand, updating the UC community, and engaging with stakeholders. Our focus remains on protecting students' access to a UC education and promoting the academic freedom, excellence, and innovation that have always been at the heart of UC's work.

Source: https://x.com/UC_Newsroom/status/1955069741590053038.

Unclear who the "stakeholders" referred to above are. Unclear what the "path forward" will be.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 6:58 PM No comments:

Labels: politics, UC Regents

Who speaks for UCLA?

We noted yesterday that there seemed to be a lot potential "deciders" of strategy when it comes to the federal fund freeze at UCLA: the chancellor, the UC president, the Regents, and the governor.

Exactly who among the feds is deciding things is also murky. If yours truly had to guess, the more academic demands probably comes from places such as the Dept. of Justice. The $1 billion number probably comes from the president.

What seems to be the case is that UCOP has taken the role of public relations regarding the UCLA freeze.

The chancellor spoke initially on August 1:

https://ia902901.us.archive.org/7/items/newsom-7-2-2025-arrests-of-immigrants/UCLA%20Chancellor%20Frenk%20on%20loss%20of%20funding.mp4.

Since that time UCOP - in the form of Meredith Turner, SVP of External Relations and Communications - has responded to the fund freeze:

https://ia802901.us.archive.org/7/items/newsom-7-2-2025-arrests-of-immigrants/UC%20response%20to%20UCLA%20federal%20grant%20cuts%208-7-2025.mp4

and the $1 billion:

https://ia802901.us.archive.org/7/items/newsom-7-2-2025-arrests-of-immigrants/UC%20on%20%241%20billion%20demand%20by%20feds%20from%20UCLA%208-8-2025.mp4.

UCLA, in contrast, released only a short listing of grants suspended without words:

https://ia802901.us.archive.org/7/items/newsom-7-2-2025-arrests-of-immigrants/UCLA%20response%20to%20federal%20grant%20cuts%208-8-2025.mp4.

As also previously noted, the Regents are meeting by (closed) teleconference late this afternoon to discuss "External Funding Litigation and Legal Issues." Possibly, some announcement will follow. It appears the chancellor will attend as Murphy Hall is listed among the remote locations:

1675 Owens Street, San Francisco, CA
1130 K Street, Suite 280, Sacramento, CA
410 Charles E Young Drive E, Los Angeles, CA
509 Aldrich Hall, Irvine, CA
1187 Coast Village Road, Montecito, CA
1017 Ellington Street, Delano, CA
445 W. Weber Avenue, Suite 200, Stockton, CA

6200 Playa Vista Drive, Playa Vista, CA
3131 Las Vegas Blvd S, Las Vegas, NV
1400 Old Spanish Trail, Houston, TX
10 Eliezer Peri Street, Tel Aviv, Israel
2600 Carretera Las Terrenas, Las Terrenas, Dominican Republic

Source: https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/meetings/agendas/aug112025.html.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 7:27 AM No comments:

Labels: governor, Milliken, politics, UC Regents

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